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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: AUGUST 05, 2009

Summary: Reports on national political developments, in the wake of the Supreme Court's ruling that declared the imposition of November 3 emergency as unconstitutional, continued to dominate headlines in almost all newspapers on Wednesday. Newspapers highlighted that "all five judges of Balochistan High Court including its chief justice resigned from their office." All dailies also reported another incident of 'blasphemy' in which a factory owner and two others were killed for allegedly desecrating the Koran in Muridke, a suburb of Lahore. Reports of the approval of a bill by the National Assembly aimed at combating domestic violence received front page display. Several newspapers highlighted reports that fourteen people, ten of them women and children, were killed in clashes between security forces and militants in North Waziristan.

Editorializing the rebuilding process in Swat, the populist and often sensational national English daily "The News," observed that "it is a question of determining the future of militancy in the region - and with this, very possibly, the future of Pakistan itself." The center-right national English daily "The Nation," advised that "our military leadership should take proactive steps to assure the people of Swat, nay, the whole country, that they are on the same page on the issue of religious extremist militancy as the political government." The Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq," noted that the "people of Swat rightly ask that how can they resume their routine life in the valley with the fact that the hardcore leadership of the militants have neither been killed, nor detained." End Summary.

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News Stories  
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"All BHC Judges Call It A Day" "The News" (08/05)

"Balochistan High Court (BHC) Chief Justice Amanullah Khan Yasinzai and all the other four judges of the court, who had taken oath under the Provisional Constitution Order (PCO), resigned from their offices to escape the references against them in the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC)."

"Factory Owner, Worker Killed In Muridke 'Desecration' Riot" "The News" (08/05)

"Mian Najeeb Zafar, owner of Eastern Leather Factory and a laborer were killed and dozens of workers injured in a leather factory on the Muridke-Sheikhupura road near Kathiala village after a factory official allegedly incited laborers by accusing the owner of desecration of the Quranic verses."

"Gojra Incident A Plot To Tarnish Pak Image: Malik" "The News"  
(08/05)

"Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik has categorically said that elements behind Gojra violence would be dealt with strictly saying Gojra incident is a planned conspiracy to defame Pakistan."

"NA Bill Outlaws Domestic Violence" "Dawn" (08/05)

"In a major move against domestic violence against women and children, the National Assembly passed a private bill on Tuesday aimed to prevent the prevalent curse through quick criminal trials and a chain of protection committees and protection officers."

"10 Civilians, Four FC Men Die In NWA Clashes" "The News" (08/05)

"Fourteen people, 10 of them women and children and four paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) soldiers, were killed and several others sustained injuries in clashes between security forces and the militants in North Waziristan Agency on Monday night."

"Four Killed In Air Strikes" "Dawn" (08/05)

"Four militants were killed when helicopter gunships pounded hideouts of the outlawed Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Chappri Ferozekhel area of Lower Orakzai Agency on Tuesday, officials said."

"Taliban Commander To Give Up Violence, Leave Maidan" "Dawn"  
(08/05)

"Maulana Shahid alias Qari Shahid, a key commander of Miadan Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), announced on Tuesday that his group would lay down arms, leave the area and start a new life, while talking to local journalists by phone from an undisclosed location."

"Forces Blow Up Madarassa, Militants' Houses In Shangla" "The News"  
(08/05)

"Security forces demolished the Madarassa of Maulana Waliullah Kabulgrami and several houses of militants and their supporters in different areas in Puran Tehsil of the Shangla district on Tuesday."

"Policeman Killed In Swat Clash" "The News" (08/05)

"A cop was killed and a paramilitary soldier sustained injuries in a joint operation against the Taliban militants in Qalang area in Swat, while bodies of five militants were recovered from Mingora city and its surroundings on Tuesday, official sources said."

"Courts, Schools Reopen In Buner" "Dawn" (08/05)

"Educational institutes and courts in the district resumed functioning on Monday. Additional District and Sessions Judge Sajjad Anwar Khan remained present in his chamber and senior Civil Judge Manzoor Qadir and Civil Judge Islamudin Khan would start hearing of cases from Wednesday."

"Swat Terrorists Behind Gojra Violence: Taseer" "Daily Times"  
(08/050)

"The terrorists who fled the operation in Swat were behind the recent violence against Christians in Gojra, Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer said on Tuesday."

"NATO Plans To Reorganize Command Structure For Afghanistan" "Dawn"  
(08/05)

"NATO's governing body approved a plan on Tuesday to reorganize the alliance's command structure in Afghanistan by setting up a new headquarters to handle the day-to-day running of the war. NATO spokesman James Appathurai said the new Intermediate Joint Headquarters in Kabul will be commanded by U.S. Lt-Gen David Rodriguez."

"Widespread Rigging In 2008 Polls Revealed" "The News" (08/05)

"The election 2008 was generally acknowledged as free and fair but a comprehensive report on Feb 18 polls by an independent civil society

organization released on Tuesday reveals innumerable tales of pre-poll manipulations, rigging, intimidation and misuse of official machinery in favor of the former ruling party. The report released by the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), a coalition of 30 leading Pakistani civil society organizations, also reflected on how the administrative machinery and the Nazims were involved in pre-polls rigging."

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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"Rebuilding Swat," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/05)

"The task of re-building in Malakand goes well beyond simply fulfilling the needs of people. It is also a question of determining the future of militancy in the region - and with this, very possibly, the future of Pakistan itself. The militant threat it has faced in recent years has endangered the entire country. We now stand at a point where it has become essential to vanquish the militants if we are to ourselves survive and move on.... The re-construction of Swat must aim also at addressing the many grievances of people who live there."

"Signs Of Normalcy," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/05)

"It is a testament to their resilience that schools have started functioning and parents have sent their boys and girls back to school. It is yet another testament to their resilience that the sands of commerce have also started flowing again.... But all this does not imply normalcy. This resilience is a coping mechanism of the residents of the valley; a dark fear still resides in their bosoms, one that needs to be shooed away by the actions of the state.... Our military leadership should take proactive steps to assure the people of Swat, nay, the whole country, that they are on the same page on the issue of religious extremist militancy as the political government."

"Situation Not Satisfactory In Swat," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (08/05)

"It will not be right to describe the security situation in Swat as satisfactory. There is a need to completely wipe out extremists from the Malakand division, and the government must remain vigilant about any potential and would-be fanatics who are present in the populace. The People of Swat rightly ask that how can they resume their routine life in the valley when the fact is that the hardcore leadership of the militants have neither been killed, nor detained. The religious leaders and the elders of the area are duty-bound to lead the misguided youths to the mainstream society, so that they don't fall prey to the ideology of radicals."

"Ending Militancy," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/05)

"Now that the military operation in Malakand Division is all but over and the residents have begun going back to their homes, the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts must receive a fillip to make for the normal, daily life to return.... Islamabad would have to urge Washington to exert its influence over these countries to donate more money, besides markedly increasing its own contribution. The economic uplift of Malakand would, after all, constitute a major achievement on the road to putting an end to terrorism from the region. The U.S. also owes an explanation about the inordinate delay in the setting up of reconstruction opportunity zones in FATA that were so proudly announced by President Bush when he visited Islamabad more than three years ago. They have yet to see the light of day."

"Propaganda Of Al Qaeda Attack On Our Nuclear Installations," editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/05)

"The British House of Commons Foreign relations Committee's spiteful remarked that Al Qaeda has focused attention on Pakistan.... The report said that a direct attack on Pakistani nuclear installations cannot be ruled out.... This propaganda is in fact a product of a conspiracy by the satanic trio of America, India and Israel under which they want to takeover and destroy Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, technology and installations.... Our government and military leadership should understand the fact that America is not a friend and is engaged in worst hostility in the garb of friendship. It wants to make us helpless by depriving us of our nuclear capabilities."

"New Policy Of American Troops Withdrawal From Afghanistan," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (08/05)

"President Obama's administration is in the midst of conflicting thinking about Afghanistan.... Where America is not desirous of any conciliation with Al Qaeda, it does not hesitate to admit that the Taliban are a party to Afghanistan political makeup. Encouraging information gleaned from American experts' conversations with media tells us that America wants to have a peaceful political resolution of the Afghan problem and for that it wants conciliation with the Taliban in order to bring them into the political mainstream of the country.... The Taliban and other Afghan parties should sit together to resolve their internal difference."

"Obama's Exit Strategy," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (08/05)

"The Taliban now clearly hear the ongoing contentious debate, in most of the Coalition's capitals, on the need and rationale to keep fighting in Afghanistan. The argument, that eight years on, the victory in Afghanistan is not yet in sight, tends to receive wider public acceptance.... Obviously, the Obama administration wants a victory, with the help of additional troops, but quickly. But the Taliban are in no such hurry, they can wait.... Another strand of the Obama exit strategy envisages the splitting up of the Taliban from the al Qaeda. Again, this has no chance, because the war in Afghanistan is now more of a national resistance, than a 'Jihad' of the Cold War vintage."

"Destroying Ourselves With A Little Help From The U.S.," an op-ed by Shireen M. Mazari in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/05)

"A cause for concern, is the U.S. plan to spend \$1 billion to expand its presence in Islamabad - especially, since central to this plan is the importation of almost 400 Marines with hundreds of APCs. There is absolutely no logic to this, but who will tell our rulers who seem hell-bent on kowtowing before Washington? Incidentally already the U.S. contingent in Pakistan is way over the sanctioned strength of 350 but does anyone in the corridors of power in Pakistan care? Nor is the U.S. Marines presence restricted to Islamabad. As some of us had been writing much earlier, they had been spotted in and around Tarbela also - where our military's Special Operation Task Force is located. It now transpires that there are already 300 plus U.S. military personnel in this area - the so-called 'trainers.' Of course, given the poor counter insurgency record of the U.S., heaven knows what training they will impart to our much better trained army! Also, if they were only 'trainers' why would the U.S. buy a large plot of land around Tarbela and send twenty large containers there.... As if all these U.S. military and undercover officials crawling all over the sensitive parts of the country were not enough, it appears that the U.S. is also using private covert setups to further a dubious and threatening agenda within Pakistan.... Unless someone can stop the rot, it is only a matter of time before the U.S. forces cross over physically on the ground from across Afghanistan. They may not get the triggers they plan on seizing but they can trigger a push towards total anarchy. Our rulers are certainly in self-destruct mode aided and abetted by the U.S."

"Case Against Sufi," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (08/05)

"Now the arrest of Sufi Muhammad should bring normalcy in the area

and steps should be taken so that about two million displaced people should live in peace in their areas.... This opportunity should not be lost by giving another chance to the militants."

"Revisiting Gojra," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (08/05)

"Gojra was no foreign hand. It was done by the clerics wedded to the extremist rhetoric of certain sections of our religious establishment. The signature of an extremist outfit was clearly there, particularly among the incendiary charges found on the scene of disaster. Let us not forget that this is not going to stop unless the local administration is strengthened and the chief minister takes a closer look at South Punjab from where the destroyers of Gojra had come."

"Muslims Too Should Mourn Killing Of Gojra Christians," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (08/05)

"The Christians are justified in their protests and we would urge Muslims as well to come forward and express fullest possible solidarity with the aggrieved community. Muslims too should take out processions to condemn the incident and send a strong signal to a handful of troublemakers that there was no place for them in the civilized society."

"In The Name Of Religion," an op-ed by Yaqoob Khan Bangash in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (08/05)

"It is clear that some aspects of the recent attacks have been clearly planned, either by local extremists or by national or international groups whose reading of religion is markedly different from that of the average Muslim's. The failure of the local administration, which in all these incidents was a silent spectator, is inexcusable. Whatever the specific motives behind a particular attack, it is clear that intolerance still thrives in Pakistan, be it against another religion or another sect."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Feierstein